

*... we here highly resolve that these dead
shall not have died in vain ...*



REMEMBER DEC. 7th!

Like those in many other western states, Utah's leaders has long recognized that an important key to prosperity is federal spending in their state. Even so, until the Great Depression of the 1930s Utahns had been largely unsuccessful in securing very much federal investment in the state. However, as a result of a peculiar set of circumstances in the 1930s involving personalities, party politics, a favorable business environment, economic depression, and geographic.

War bonds serendipity Utah emerged from the 1940s a much different place than it had been at the beginning of the decade. Utah's role in the World War II was at the heart of these changes. This activity led to a variety of other changes that fundamentally affected the cultural and political life of the state. Population shifts, societal alterations, transforming cultural patterns, and a host of other subtle moves recast Utah from an isolated and culturally backward state into an area much more tied to the national mainstream.

Without question, the rapid growth of defense spending in Utah, coming even before the first shots were fired at Pearl Harbor, fueled the major transformations of the society. Utah had been economically devastated during the 1930s; in the late 1930s Utah still had from 30 to 60 percent more people on federal relief projects—WPA, CCC, or some other program—than the national average. While the national average for people unemployed in the 1930s peaked at 25 percent, in Utah the number of workers without jobs reached a high of 36 percent. Utah government and business leaders tried a variety of avenues to ease this situation, and in the latter 1930s as the nation began to rearm in response to the crisis in Europe they exploited the opportunity offered to secure defense dollars in the state.

Some of this came directly from military installations that were established in the state. Fort Douglas, long established near Salt Lake City as a result of Col. Connor's California Volunteers in the Civil War, was revitalized and made into a processing center for recruits. The Ogden Arsenal had been established in 1921 but had a relatively small mission to store ammunition until the crisis of World War II when it became a manufacturing, storage, and shipping location for the West Coast.

Hill Field, as another example, was established in 1940 as a result of a combination of influences that began in 1934 when the Army Air Corps flew the mail and based its western zone out of Salt Lake City. The zone's commander, Henry H. Arnold, became enthusiastic about the area's ability to support West Coast aeronautical logistics requirements. Arnold told his superiors in September 1934 "that any Depot west of the mountains might be rendered untenable by a determined adversary." During the late 1930s two additional strategic reasons emerged for creating a supply and repair base near Salt Lake City: the historic confluence of highways and railroads in the area ensured that the base would be easily accessible, and the site was essentially equidistant from the three major military centers on the West Coast, Seattle-Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles-San Diego. Accordingly, on 7 November 1940, Hill became operational and served throughout the war as a major repair and supply depot for the Army Air Forces. At its largest, Hill Field employed 15,000 civilians, 6,000 military, and several thousand POWs, making it the largest employer in the state.

In all, Utah had fourteen important military installations created nearly 40,000 jobs in the state during the war. These installations, more than half of them at Hill Field, and the multiplying effect of defense spending in the local economy provided

a great boost to the state.

In every case, the military services explicitly recognized several unique attributes Utah offered. First, there was the issue of safety from attack, a not unrealistic concern by the military in 1941 and 1942. The ability of the Japanese Navy to strike 6,000 miles east of their traditional sphere of operations and to cripple the American fleet in Hawaii was not an action to be dismissed without serious consideration. If Japan could do it there, what was to keep the Japanese from hitting core military installations on the West Coast? In the early days of the war, no one knew that the Japanese did not have that capability, and on 9 December 1941 Henry H. Arnold, commanding the United States Army's Air Forces, directed that military resources be dispersed inland so that a single attack could not destroy significant military capability. In such an environment, decisions to locate training and other support facilities to inland areas was a natural extension. The greater security for bases in the Great Basin interior ensured that military efforts would not be impeded by possible enemy attack.

Second, the open spaces available in Utah and throughout the West also made training operations there all the more attractive. The selection of the Wendover, Utah, training site is a case in point. Located on the Utah-Nevada border approximately 110 miles west of Salt Lake City, it had vast amounts of open flat land that the Department of the Interior already controlled. The town had only a small population of approximately 103 people at the time and yet possessed adequate railroad lines running between Salt Lake City and the West Coast. The weather conditions in the area were also ideally suited for flying training, as there was very little rain or snow and flight training could take place year-round. Adding to the attractiveness of the desert area were Army Air Corps plans to base a heavy bomber unit at the Salt Lake City municipal airport and the location of the supply and repair depot at Hill Field, near Ogden. It was envisioned that the units at these bases would be prime users of the proposed range. In June 1940 a large area near Wendover was designated as a general purpose range for aerial gunnery and actual bombing practice.

Third, the Wasatch Front area was excellent for logistics support operations. It was basically equidistant from the three major West Coast military centers at Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. There was also a superb transportation infrastructure in place to support logistics activities. Transcontinental railroads and highways were in place, and Salt Lake City had been an integral part of the transcontinental airway system since the early 1920s. The shipping and receiving of war material, therefore, posed little difficulty.

Finally, the state of Utah had a large number of intelligent, deferential people who were out of work and willing to be retrained for military logistics purposed. That, coupled with the aggressive actions of the state's business and political leaders prompted the siting of installations in Utah. The military expansion built upon Utah's recognized strengths and did not represent a great departure in direction, only an acceleration of what had been underway for some time.

In addition to the actual military installations established or revitalized in the state, defense contractors also enjoyed remarkable growth as a result of the war. By any measure an economist can devise, the economy of Utah boomed as a result of war contracts. The value added by the manufacturer between 1939 and 1947—a measure of profits after all costs have been subtracted—was \$85 million, which represented a 196 percent increase. The state's business and political leaders were aggressive in obtaining federal spending for the state, and 91 percent of Utah's wartime expansion was financed by public funds. This allowed Utah's per capita expenditure for new industrial plants from the federal government to be \$534 while the national average was \$188.

Industrial expansion in Utah took a course that emphasized historic strengths. The state, rich in natural resources and with a long tradition of extractive industry, contributed coal, iron,

dolomite, limestone, alunite, copper, gas, and the refined products to the war effort. The most significant of these was the Geneva Steel Works in Orem. It accounted for nearly two-thirds of the \$310 million made available to Utah for new facility construction by the Defense Plant Corporation in 1941, and when operating at maximum capacity employed 4,200 workers. During its period of government operation, it took iron from Utah's mines, as well as from elsewhere, and produced 634,010 tons of plate steel and another 144,280 tons of shaped steel.

Throughout the state, mines for all types of minerals were reopened, expanded, or constructed. The capabilities of processing plants were also greatly enlarged. This practice was also repeated in the state's weapons industry. The Browning Gun Works, manufacturers of fine small arms since the mid-nineteenth century, was expanded in the war. Also at the same time, the Ogden Arsenal began making ammunition. The Remington Arms Company constructed a small arms plant in Salt Lake County to make 30- and 50-caliber ammunition, and in the process created 10,000 new jobs.

The economic roller-coaster ride of Utah business was perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the state's wartime role, but it may have not been the most significant. The social and political changes that were forced on the state as a result of the wartime expansion had a fundamental impact. Thousands of Utahns found themselves in military service literally around the world. In 1941, out of more than 1.3 million service members in the United States only 7,000 were from Utah, 2,000 of which were in the state's National Guard units. In June 1945 there were 62,107 Utahns in active military service, and this did not include those already discharged for one reason or another and those killed. The movement of large numbers of people from the state to other places, disrupting lives and comfortable patterns of behavior, had a significant impact on those who went through the trauma of war. Upon return, they were never the same again and old perspectives had to be altered to take into account the new realities.

Equally important, the state experienced a rapid and sustained influx of immigrants from outside, most of whom did not subscribe to the dominant religious position and eschewed its conservatism. For instance, Utah's population increased 25.2 percent during the decade—most of the increase coming along the Wasatch Front—as it grew from 555,310 to 688,862 persons. This immigration greatly increased the minority population of the state, especially as Black and Hispanic Americans moved in to take defense jobs. Another 10,000 Japanese-Americans were relocated from the West Coast to Topaz, Utah, as part of the anti-Japanese hysteria in late 1941 and 1942, and many remained in the state thereafter. This population growth and expansion brought a far greater degree of pluralism than ever before had been present in Utah.

The population shifts also changed the region in other subtle and vital ways. Servicemen and transient war workers, for instance, were everywhere: they were passing through the region enroute to debarkation points overseas or home on furlough, or were temporarily stationed in the state. These people pumped dollars into every community through which they passed. They also brought Iowa farmboy, New York streetwise, and southern homespun manners to a region that had been uniquely isolated by distance and mores from most of the rest of the nation. Many of those stationed in the region formed attachments to it that affected the rest of their lives. These population shifts also created housing and other urban problems that had to be dealt with throughout the 1940s.

The social dislocation arising from the war was also great. The disruption of the traditional family, the sense of impermanence, the absence of normal attachments, the competition for scarce resources, the stress of the crisis, and numerous other factors of a less tangible nature all came together to turn society topsy turvy. Historian John Costello documented one aspect of the changing sexual mores of the United States brought about by the war by suggesting that not only did women enter the work force in a big way, but many of the other

traditional sexual boundaries were eroded by the war. He commented that total war unleashed a "Hedonistic impulse" in the overall society. The thought of perhaps dying tomorrow created a psyche directed toward living life to the fullest at the present both among those who might go into combat and those with whom they associated. It loosened morals and opened doors for opportunity as never before.

It apparently made little difference that Salt Lake City and Tooele, Utah, were far from the direct influences of combat. The comings and goings of military personnel in the region, most likely to combat theaters, held the same potential for eventual death as those closer to the action. There were large numbers of war brides in Utah, and they lived with the same fears as those closer to the front lines. The "flyboys" and "G.I.s" training or even permanently stationed at the many bases in the region met, fell in love, and in some cases married local young women. They were often condemned for a "love-them-and-leave-them" attitude, however, and virtually every community had problems of one sort or another relating to this social interaction. City fathers were forever trying to protect the local women from the perceived licentiousness of the servicemen.

Some even condoned prostitution as a means of easing pressures in the local community. The notorious "two-bit street," Ogden, Utah's 25th Street red light district had been around for many years prior to the war, but it was expanded during the war as the so-called "Victory Girls" catered to the wishes of the local servicemen. As long as the activity was out of sight from most of the public the city fathers turned a blind eye to the goings-on, in part because it eased some of the pressure on their daughters.

Other affects of the war to Utahns involved the challenges of living in a new environment. Never again would life in the state be as simple as it had seemed before the war. To a very real extent the war effort served as the catalyst to bring Utah's economy, political culture, and social life into the national mainstream.